

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 132049Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3945

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 8541

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, ASEC, EINV, VE

SUBJECT: NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING

1. BILL COLEMAN OF OWENS-ILLINOIS AND JAKE LONGAN MET LAST NIGHT WITH ERASTO FERNANDEZ AND ARISTIDIS LANDER. THE LATTER TWO AGREED TO PERMIT THE TRANSFER OF 100,000 BOLIVARES TO THE KIDNAPPERS UNDER "LOOSE MONITORING" THROUGH VENEZUELAN INDUSTRIALIST EMILIO CONDE JAHN. ACCORDING TO THE MOST RECENT COMMUNICATION FROM THE KIDNAPPERS, THIS AMOUNT IS A NEW CONCESSION AND WILL BE USED FOR EXPENSES REQUIRED IN CONNECTION WITH RECEIVING THE RANSOM PAYMENT ABROAD. A DEADLINE OF THE WEEK OF JULY 11 WAS SET. HOWEVER, WHEN CONDE JAHN WAS APPROACHED, HE REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE. CURRENT PLANS ARE TO INFORM THE KIDNAPPERS OF THIS FACT IN THE NEXT TELEPHONE CALL RECEIVED BY TERRY CANAVEN WHICH IS EXPECTED THIS EVENING AT 6:00 P.M. AND TO REQUEST AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF PAYMENT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ERASTO FERNANDEZ IS RELUCTANT TO USE URD DEPUTY FORTUNATO HERRERA AS A BAGMAN IN THIS VENTURE SINCE THE LATTER IS VERY TRICKY AND HAS MANAGED TO LOSE PREVIOUS SURVEILLANCE WITH EASE. FERNANDEZ ALSO BELIEVES THAT HERRERA MIGHT TRANSFER THE FUNDS WITHIN THE PRECINCTS OF THE CONGRESS TO WHICH THE POLICE WOULD NOT HAVE EASY ACCESS. CANAVEN HAS INDICATED THAT HE IS PREPARED TO DELIVER THE MONEY HIMSELF, IF NECESSARY.

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2. COLEMAN ALSO DISCUSSED WITH FERNANDEZ AND

LANDER THE POSSIBILITY OF PAYING THE RANSOM ABROAD.  
THE RESPONSES HE OBTAINED WERE AMAZINGLY SOFT AND  
MAY BE AN INDICATION THAT THE GOV IS BEGINNING TO  
REASSESS THEIR POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR INABILITY  
TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE CASE. ON THE OTHER HAND,  
NEITHER FERNANDEZ OR LANDER COULD INDICATE THAT PAYMENT  
OF RANSOM ABROAD WOULD HAVE TOP-LEVEL VENEZUELAN  
APPROVAL. WE UNDERSTAND THAT COLEMAN IS SEEKING A  
MEETING WITH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR, OCTAVIO LEPAGE,  
TO ADDRESS THIS POINT.  
ASENCIO

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## Message Attributes

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